Destruction of Buddha statues in Afghanistan

3691. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister has received any Memorandum from several Members of Parliament and others with regard to the destruction of Buddha statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban militia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it has been urged the demanded that Government urgently initiate action with regard to convening of the special session of the U.N. Security Council to discuss and take measures for preventing the destructive forces from committing further outrage; and

(d) the details of the action taken by Government in this regard and the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) to (d) The decision of the Taliban militia to order the destruction of Buddhist statues in Afghanistan evoked concern and disgust and led to the unanimous adoption of a Resolution by both Houses on 2.3.2001 condemning the Taliban edict. An appeal was made to the World community especially the UN to prevail upon the Taliban so that they desist from this senseless act of vandalism.

India took an active part in UN foras on this subject. This included the co-sponsorship of a UNGA Resolution which was adopted on March 9, 2001, calling upon the Taliban to abide by their previous commitments to protect Afghanistan's cultural heritage from all acts of vandalism, damage and theft. India was also active in UNESCO when the forum was seeking to prevent the Taliban from carrying out the edict.

The Taliban's obscurantist ideology puts them beyond reason and logic.